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EVERYTHING

MARSLAND, NEBRASKA.

AROUND THE WORLD

Scenes Surrounding the Sea of Nazareth, Bethsaida,
Capharnaum and Chorazian.

DAMASCUS, SYRIA, March, 1903.

Within that narrow circuit the kings
of Jerusalem and Cyprus; the princes
of Antioch; the counts of Tripoli and
Sidon; the great masters of the hospital;
the temple and the teutonic orders; the
republics of Venice, Genoa and Pisa;
the pope's legate; the kings of France
and England assumed an independent
command. Seventeen tribunals exer-
cised the power of life and death. All
the eyes of Europe were then fixed on
that spot. Acre contained in itself a
complete miniature of fabled Europe
and Latin Christendom. Napoleon had
cause to remember Acre as the place
where he suffered his defeat, his first
Waterloo.

Speeding northward Tyre is passed,
a city founded 2750 B. C., if Herodotus
"father of history" is correct. In
Joshua 19:29 Tyre is called "the strong
city." It was Hiram, king of Tyre,
that provided Solomon with cedars from
Lebanon, and workmen for building the
temple at Jerusalem. The Assyrians
took Tyre by siege, then evacuated the
city. It was taken 584 B. C. by Ne-
buchadnezzar who besieged it no less
than thirteen years before the capture.

But in 333 B. C. Alexander the Great
tried to take the city whose ramparts
were said to have been 150 feet in
height. The old city being situated on
an island, an enormous mole was built
by the aid of the Cypriots and the
Phoenicians and the city taken after a
seven months' siege by that general
who is said to have wept because he
could find no more worlds to conquer.
Had he only marched eastward to Cat-
hoy his whole army might have em-
ployed itself in measuring strength with
the rat-eating, pyrotechnic Chinese.
Strabo stated that Alexander utterly
destroyed the city, burnt it to the
ground, mercilessly put to the sword
all who resisted, hung 2000 of its citi-
zens along the sea shore, and sold 30,
000 of its inhabitants into slavery in
order to enrich his coffers, and in spite
of it all the city recovered its greatness
again in 262, just 70 years after. Thus
history records the fulfilling of the
prophecy of Isaiah 23: 15-17. Paul
once sailed from here. The Savior
visited it and declared that it would
have repented in sack-cloth and ashes
if as much work had been bestowed up-
on it and Sidon as had been devoted to
Bethsaida and Chorazin. Smith said
of Tyre, "It had been the parent of
cities which at a distant period had en-
joyed a long life and had died; and it
had survived more than 1500 years its
greatest colony, Carthage. It had out-
lived Egyptian Thebes and Babylon,
and ancient Jerusalem. It had seen
Grecian cities rise and fall." After be-
ing taken by the Saracens it never re-
covered its former greatness but fell in-
to ruin. A traveler through here in
1697 wrote that he saw "not so much
as one entire house left." During the
seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
Tyre was partially rebuilt and now
contains a population of about 5000.
Of old Tyre it may be said that even
the dust has been scraped from the
rocks and thrown into the sea by the
driving winds and the decay incident to
time's forward march. Passing on
north from Tyre the ruins of Sarepta
are pointed out by the boatmen fami-
liar with every site of interest. Sarepta,
the Zarephath of the Old Testament,
was where Elijah procured the restora-
tion of the widow's child (Kings 17:8-24).
Sarepta is scarcely lost to view when
Sidon presents itself for consideration.
Sidon, a city of about 11000 people, is
even older than Tyre, being mentioned
in Genesis 10:19. Homer thought so
much of Sidon that he gives it particu-
lar mention in his writings. In I Kings
5:6 it is stated that none "had the skill
to hew timber like the Sidonians." Strabo
mentioned it as being celebrated for
its prowess in art, science and
philosophy, who added: "For wealth,
commerce, luxury, vice and power it
was unequalled in the Levant, until
Tyre outstripped it, and Shalmaneser
conquered it." Xerxes depended upon
the Sidonians for the success of his
navy in the invasion of Greece. In
351 B. C. Sidon rebelled or revolted
from its Persian ruler while Persia was
engaged in a contest with Egypt. The
treachery of a Sidonian, Benedict
Arnold delivered Sidon into the hands
of the Persian soldiers. Thereupon,
the Sidonians shut themselves up with-
in the walls, set the city on fire, de-
stroying not only their houses but also
sacrificing themselves to the flames. It
is said that no less than 400,000 per-
sons perished in the flames.

The revolving screw pushes the ship
northward and Beirut is reached, where
a night was spent prior to beginning

the trip over the Lebanon mountains
to Damascus, ninety miles inland by
rail. Beirut offers little to the sight-
seer, though it boasts of 120,000 people.
The trip to Dog river is simply a pleas-
ant drive as nothing is to be seen save
a few Roman inscriptions which are
lacking in interest as they are dim.
The American college reference to
which was made in a former article,
should be visited as it is regarded as
the largest American institution of
learning not on American soil. Leav-
ing Beirut at 7 a. m. the train rises
over the Lebanon mountains using the
rack and pinion system, reaching a
height measuring 4580 above sea level.
At this high point the scenery is a
panorama of beauty. Though twenty
miles from the Mediterranean, one is so
deceived by surrounding that the sea
seems to nestle only a few hundred
rods away. Mount Hermon's snowy
slopes and rugged peak present a vision
of eternal cold. At Hermon's feet be-
gins many a stream, which uniting,
form rushing rivers. As the train
speeds toward Damascus, after leav-
ing the slow rack and pinion process,
it winds its way along side the Litany
river, which rushes onward as a rest-
less mountain current. The line
enters the Anti-Lebanon Country, and
when fifty-four miles from Beirut, pass-
es over the Anti-Lebanon watershed at
an altitude of 4610 feet, the highest
point enroute to Damascus. Thence
the valley of the Baroda is reached.
Baroda is the Arabic name for the
Abana of Bible history. Along this
stream's thickly wooded banks the
puffing locomotive dashes, bringing to
the interested passenger memories of
days long since faded into the long
night of history. This rushing moun-
tain torrent glides along between well
worn rocks, past trees that have for
years watched its behavior, but are
now being whipped about as tall
giants moored to the eroding banks.
Through orchards laden with
blossoms of many colors, presenting a
scene beautiful, a spectacle that for
variety and depth of color would con-
test successfully with Japan's cherry
blossoms at their best.

Were I disposed to do so and had
the time, columns would be written,
setting forth in word pictures, the trip
over the Lebanon to Damascus, but
brevity must be my watchword.

At Ain Fijeh, fourteen miles from
Damascus, a river of water bursts
forth from the mountain slope and
empties into the Baroda though it is
more than twice as large as the Baroda
up to this point. More than three-fold
its former size, the river hastens on to
Damascus, with the train ever keeping
it close company. When a few miles
out, the towers and minarets of Da-
mascus burst upon the view as the train
swings around a curve. Soon the
Berkameh station is reached where
most passengers alight as the hotels
are nearest this station. The train
goes on, skirting the borders of the
city a mile and a half, reaching the
Meidan.

Damascus with its population of a
quarter of a million people is a conun-
dum. Josephus declares that it was
in existence before Abraham was cal-
led by the Most High God to found the
chosen race. Traditions are ex-
tant throughout the orient placing the
events connected with the human race
about Damascus.

Shakespeare has fallen into line with
the general drift of thought and in
King Henry VI: 1-3 says:
Nay, stand thou back, I will not budge a
foot;
This be Damascus, be thou cursed Cain,
To slay thy brother Abel, if thou wilt.

Other cities have risen, fallen, de-
cayed. While Babylon is a heap of
ruins far out in the desert, Damascus
is what Isaiah 7:8 called it—"The
head of Syria."

Genesis 14:15 tells of Damascus and
what was once Damascus is Damascus
still. True, it has been destroyed, be-
sieged, rebuilt and destroyed, but
Damascus will not down. Like the
fabled Phoenix it rises from its ashes
as if ordained to live, though centuries
grow old and gray with weary years.
If I would venture and opinion I
would say Damascus owes her exist-
ence to the rivers which go coursing
through her streets. Without them
she would be a worthless spot amid a
great desert, not even attractive to a
weary, wandering Bedouin. "Are not
these rivers of Damascus and to be
preferred to the waters of Israel?"

E. C. HORN.

[To be continued.]

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